

"The Flame That Is France"

By BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

THE FLAME THAT IS FRANCE, by Henry Malherbe, under its French title, *La Flamme au Poing*, captured the Goncourt Prize for the year 1917. It has been translated into English by V. W. B. in a masterly fashion. It is, in fact, not a translation, but a perfect transcription of the style, thought and sensibility of the author.

It has, as we said, won the Goncourt Prize; but this book should be crowned by the Nine Muses on the summit of Parnassus. It is a great masterpiece. It is the art, soul, sensibility, aspiration and heroism of France packed into 182 pages.

France can no longer be called a country. She is a spiritual empire. The Tri-Color is no longer a flag. It is a vast sail of triune fire fixed to the mast of the earth as she plunges on her orbit.

We are a tiny star lost in space. But there is France! We shall, in time, crumble to dust and be sucked back to the sun. But millions of the dead, turned to stone and ice, shall have lived when France lived. For she is the perpetual Valley Forge of freedom, the summit and the glory of man's evolution.

France is the great experiment of the human race. She has tried all ways. She has been tried all ways. She is Oriental, Occidental, pagan, Christian, mystic. She is a vibrating, electric, thaumaturgic chameleon? She loves life like a child—and she can go to her death with the smile of a martyr in the flames.

The soil of France contains something miraculous. It flowers minds. It reeks with life. It is the fecundating tomb of gods. It is the Hall of Surprises. Two of the greatest miracles of all time have been enacted on that soil—the miracle of Jeanne d'Arc and the miracle of Verdun.

Italy is a magnificent bouquet in the hands of Aphrodite; but France is a mystical flourishing sword in the hands of Prometheus.

The flame that is France is implicit in this book by Henry Malherbe. The style of the author is the style of France itself. The soul of the author is the soul of France itself. The book is a vibrating, shimmering literary glory. It is a vast symphony of words, images, sketches, prose chants, horrors and apotheoses done by a French Beethoven of the pen.

In this little book there is compressed Dante, Homer, Hugo, Lamartine, Tolstoi (of *War and Peace*), Poe and Flaubert. It is the Great War sifted through the brain of French genius by one who has lived in the trenches and pulsed to the mad song of the shells. The human soul

is sounded to its utter depth. Man in his terrible hour of agony is visualized as no one has yet attempted during the war. Everything is said in this book. After reading it you will know the significance of the year 1914. Exquisitely human, Malherbe knows his task as a French soldier and as a French writer. A heart of fire and a brain of light eased in a will of steel.

The book begins with three dialogues. Before the soldier in his dugout Memory, Love and Death come to speak to him. Each is in the form of a dialogue between the soul of the soldier and the shade.

Memory chides him lest he forget those he has left at home—"they who were united about your soul as about a lamp."

Then Love. This is a controversy as to the constancy or inconstancy of the wife or the sweetheart left behind. France must be repopled. Is the wife absolved of her vows?

Then Death—and this is a colloquy which for sheer lyrical power and beauty rises to the grandeur of the songs of King David.

The chapter called *The Burning Gaze* is a description of the battlefield from an observation post. One literally lives with the author in his lookout, so vivid and vital is the prose.

In *Moments of Storm* there are compressed five or six stories, none of more than two hundred words, that for starkness and incisiveness have nowhere been equalled. They are silhouettes of horror drawn by a hand as sure as De Maupassant's.

There are short, tremendous conversations on the basic riddles of existence. The author does not believe this war will debase man, but that it will glorify him. We are at the threshold of a heroic-human age. The race will come forth from this baptism of fire with a lordlier stride. The trenches are bringing the races closer together, not politically, but ethically. War is the great democrat.

We could quote endlessly from this great book, but space costs and paper is dear. Besides, it is a book to be bought, read, kept, treasured and reread a hundred times.

THE FLAME THAT IS FRANCE. By HENRY MALHERBE. The Century Company. \$1.

"Diet and Health"

LAUGH and grow fat or laugh and grow thin; or, should the reader be one of those happy individuals whose weight is in proportion to his height, laugh and learn how to preserve your ideal figure. Dr. Lulu Hunt Peters provides directions for doing all of the above in *Diet and Health, with Key to the Calories*.

Facts scientifically accurate are blended deftly with humor and satire in this clever book of condensed information. Dr. Peters may have lost cons of pounds by her own method, as she coyly admits, but she still retains the breezy good nature usually associated with the stout person. Evidences of it flicker and flash throughout of the book like whitecaps of wit on a scientific sea of text, bobbing up where one least expects them.

The author defines a calorie as "a heat unit and food value unit; that amount of heat necessary to raise one pound of water 4 degrees Fahrenheit." Food burned in the body by oxidization gives off approximately the same amount of heat as when burned in the laboratory in a testing apparatus, hence the basis for Dr. Peters's computations.

Part of the book consists of a table giving the value in calories of an average helping of almost everything one is likely to find on any menu, from peanuts back again to pretzels. Would you be fat, then? Or thin? Or medium? Consult formulae to determine your ideal weight, decide whether your mode of living requires more or less energy and regulate your diet to include food of greater or less calorie value. It is delightfully simple and the author positively guarantees results.

Sprightly marginal notes by Dr. Peters and startling sketches by her nephew, Dawson Hunt Perkins, a precocious youth of 10, make a bright book more attractive.

"Watch your weight," admonishes Dr. Peters. The book is dedicated to Herbert C. Hoover and will appeal to all whose avoirdupois is a problem.

DIET AND HEALTH, WITH KEY TO THE CALORIES. By DR. LULU HUNT PETERS. Reilly & Britton. \$1.

"The Vandal of Europe"

THE personal diary of Wilhelm Mühlton (former director of Krupp's), which has been translated into English by William L. McPherson under the title, *The Vandal of Europe*, is well worth while.

The diary remains as it was written during the first months of the war; and the astonishing thing about it is not that some of Mühlton's surmises were wrong but that his viewpoint in many cases was correct.

Shortly after the assassination at Sarajevo, Mühlton wrote: "Now we are sure to have a European war. Austria must make a demonstration of some sort or else her fate is sealed. Otherwise all the Hapsburg races will shake themselves free from the feeble and hesitating Dual Monarchy. . . . Austria-Hungary will not grant to her discordant and disunited peoples the opportunity they desire to create out of her territory various smaller independent States. . . . A generous and cleverly planned liberation of the subject races might have had such a moral effect that Austria would stand to-day far stronger and less isolated in spite of the diminution of her territorial holdings."

Hungary, the former Herr Direktor says, is largely responsible for this and is "a harsher exponent than Austria of the principle of the suppression of subject races."

The author tells us that before starting on his trip to Norway in the summer of 1914 the Kaiser had held a conference with the Austrians and had assured them "that this time he would go with them through thick and thin." The Kaiser's promise has been so unqualified that the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs admitted: "Thereafter, on the German side, a check or limitation could not well be considered." The Secretary thought, however, he could make a better impression in Paris and St. Petersburg with a statement that he never knew the contents of the note.

The German public, Mühlton says, awaited and greeted the decision for war with relief. He proceeds to an arraignment of the German people as a whole: "Germany had become rich and powerful in a material sense, but foreign distaste for everything German had increased to an almost incredible extent. The outside world found Germans brutal when they pursued politics; hard hearted when they were masters; unscrupulous when

they conducted business; dull and ossified when they were taught; awkward and unpolished wherever they appeared; without taste when they bought; ridiculous when they wanted to appear distinguished; cowardly when it came to individual opinion," and so on, for many paragraphs.

"Where, then," asks Krupp's former director, "is the great idea, the bold programme, the illumination of the future, which Germany represents and which justifies its leadership? We work hard and methodically, we have become prosperous and ambitious. But have our advances and achievements in other fields kept step therewith? Were we not in the time of our political disunion and economic poverty a more significant factor in the culture of the world and in the development of human thought than we are to-day?"

"No wonder the German proletariat finally welcomed a test: that it saw itself rid of an Alp like burden when it realized: 'Now things have broken loose and we shall soon realize where we stand.'" In summing up Mühlton declares: "I cannot too often din into the ears of Germans that what is lacking in moral superiority cannot be replaced by force."

Mühlton notes that the German press is trying to explain away the unpopularity of the German cause in the world by explaining that "they have not sufficiently debauched the foreign press yet. Mark the word debauched! not enlightened, or educated! The German conception of the rest of the world is very simple! What was beyond the skill of our diplomats is to be accomplished by the Golden Ass."

"Oh, this foreign propaganda! Had the Germans kept quiet they might perhaps in their handicapped position have awakened some sympathy and their true nature might have been forgotten or never known. But now they attach great value to carrying out a victorious press campaign. For this end they are obliged to speak out. But no sooner do they speak out than their last friend turns away with horror from the coarseness and arrogance of their attitude."

These words were all written during the first three months of the war. A remarkable book.

THE VANDAL OF EUROPE. By WILHELM MÜHLTON. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$1.50.

Ben Kuteher, the young Russian American illustrator of Oscar Wilde's *A House of Pomegranates*, is now with the camouflage corps at Washington.

Josselyn's Wife

The story of Ellen Latimer, a country girl, who becomes the wife of Gibbs Josselyn, the son of a man of wealth. Gibbs Josselyn's father has married a young and beautiful woman. It is she who eventually comes between Gibbs and Ellen. The affair is critical but by no means hopeless, and Mrs. Norris does not permit it to become so. The crisis in their lives is rather fairly on the way to be straightened out when the senior Josselyn is inexplicably murdered.

The murder followed a quarrel between father and son. The interest in the critical relations between Gibbs and Ellen is now distracted and intensified by the desperate situation in which the son finds himself. There is a murder trial. The great compulsion upon Ellen is to stand by her husband. She does it. The ending of the book is satisfactory and has the accent of reality. The solution of the murder mystery is startling, adroit and convincing.

"An excellent story of Kathleen Norris's most excellent brand."—*From a review in "The New York Sun."*

Kathleen Norris
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

The Guardians of the Gate

Histories of the Belligerents.

The Serbs were a great people six hundred years ago. Never have they been more glorious than in their present plight. R. G. D. Laflin thoroughly knows Serbia, and pictures our ally holding the gate of freedom of life and of thought against sinister forces of moral enslavement. Contains an interesting chapter on the Jugo-Slavs.

\$2.25 net at all bookstores.
May we send you a booklet describing the other histories of the Belligerents?
Oxford University Press
AMERICAN BRANCH
35 West 32nd Street, New York.

H. G. WELLS' NEW NOVEL IS

H. G. Wells at his Best

JOAN & PETER

H. G. Wells at his Best

"Mr. Wells at his highest point of attainment . . . an absorbingly interesting book . . . consummate artistry. Here is Wells the story teller, the master of narrative."—*N. Y. Eve. Sun.*

H. G. Wells at his Best

"Mr. Wells' finest achievement . . . one of the most significant books of the year."—*Phila. Press.*

H. G. Wells at his Best

"The strongest novel Mr. Wells has yet given to the world and the one most likely to leave a lasting impression."—*N. Y. Herald.*

H. G. Wells at his Best

"The best fiction penned by Mr. Wells in recent years."—*Boston Herald.*

JOAN & PETER

"Never has Mr. Wells spread for us such a gorgeous panorama . . . a living story, a vivacious narrative."

At all bookstores. \$1.75

The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York

Bonds win Battles—Buy more Bonds